Man's need

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[0:00] Let us turn this morning to the passage we read in Romans chapter 1, in reading at verse 21.

Because although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man.
So on. So, it's a reality that becomes very obvious to each and every one of us as we sit in churches up and down the land.
Churches where God's word is faithfully and sincerely preached. But so often, part of the emphasis in these various congregations is the emphasis of man's need to know the Lord.
[1:26] And it has been doubtless an emphasis that you have heard over many years in this congregation.

And it's an emphasis also that in some respects might seem and sound very repetitive. Because as we go through the scriptures from week to week, at some point or other in almost every service, in every sermon, will come again the reiteration that there is a need in every one of us.
And that need is a real need, and that need is something that requires dealing with, it requires dealt with, and it is blown up and exaggerated so often, in order that we see that need and respond to it.
And it's no different today. Because this morning again, I want us to come back to this theme and to this emphasis.
And to do so looking at this passage here in Romans, because in this passage in Romans, Paul again highlights, Paul focuses our attention on this recurring problem.
[2:50] The recurring problem of human nature, and this desperate need in human nature, to be recognized and to be dealt with.

Paul here does it in his letter to the Romans, right at the outset of his letter, in order that he can, in this long letter, detailed letter to the Roman church, go on to show not only what is the problem in human nature, but go on to show what God is going to do with that problem, what God has done for that problem, and what the results upon the life of every man and every woman is, who has not only seen the problem, but responded to the problem.
And this morning I want us to do it first of all, by noticing that this need is highlighted and focused for us this morning first of all, by Paul reminding us of the reality of sin.
The reality of sin shows, it highlights, it bears home upon the fact that there is a need in human nature.
And he does that not in this first chapter so much, but in chapter 5, when he says, all have sinned, all have come short of the glory of God.
[4:17] There is none righteous, no not one. We are all classed under this one massive canopy, all sinners. And the reality of sin is thus, first of all by Paul, the emphasis to show that this need is real in human nature.

This need is real in you and I. And I don't want us to spend much time on it, in terms of going back over the historical origins of sin, but merely to emphasize, first and foremost today, that the reality of sin in the world, shows us there is a need.
The reality of sin has taken us away. It has removed from us that original righteousness which was ours. Instead of us being a pure and a righteous people, we are a people that are at enmity with God.
We are a people that are hostile to God. We are a people that do not love God or want God. Instead of being a people that are at peace with Him, we know nothing but unrest and turmoil in our souls

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and in our minds.
Instead of knowing a proneness or a willingness to obey and to serve Him and to do what He demands of us, there is this constant battle to do what He doesn't want us to do.
[5:43] And just as we were looking at it in relation to the children, how we can see it in the school program, how we can see it amongst friends, how we can see it exercised in the form, just as this pull is with the child to do what is not good and what is wrong, so with us as adults there is this constant ongoing battle within our souls and within our wills to do what is wrong because there is this proneness, there is this bias against God.

And it is born out of this reality of sin in the world. This corruption that has taken us, this corruption that has pervaded us, this corruption which controls us, keeps us bound, keeps us bottled up to do the things that are not legitimate in the eyes of God.
The reality of sin in the world, Paul is saying, reminds you and it reminds me of our need, first of all, to know the Lord God.
Our need to know Him as He is. But then Paul not only reflects on the reality of sin, not only does he make it that bland, that sweeping statement that all come under its canopy, he goes on to show further how the results of sin in each of us, in each and every one of us, again highlights and shows us our need of knowing the Lord.
And he does it first of all by telling us in verse 21 that we do not glorify Him as God. There is this inability to glorify God as God.
[7:35] This first result or consequence of the reality of sin in the world is this response by man and by woman to the God who has made all things and made man and made each and every one of us.

The response of all to this God is not glorifying Him as God. And each and every one of us, again, even at an elementary level, we know that our goal, our purpose in life was to glorify God.
We know that we've been created to glorify Him. We've been created to adore this God who has made all things and who by His power sustains all things.
We've been created not only to adore Him but to appreciate Him. We've been created to give thanks to Him. We've been created to love Him. All aspects of glorifying this God that we need to know but don't know or don't serve.
We know Him but we don't serve Him. And Paul is saying that there is in man this first inability not to glorify God as God.
[8:52] There is no glorifying of Him, no appreciation of Him, no thanks to Him, no love for Him, no dedication and commitment to Him as God. And He says first and foremost that this is a result.

This is a consequence of the reality of sin in each and every one of us. And He's saying to us as He says to us this morning very clearly that this, if we are not glorifying this God who has made all things and who has made us, made us for Himself, this God who wants and demands worship, this God who wants and demands thanks, this God who wants and demands dedication and love, this God who wants all that but is not getting it, Paul is saying that if He isn't, this is showing us and this is highlighting to us why we need to know Him, why we need to give to Him.
because it is a demand, it is the demand of our God upon our lives. And this has been an ongoing characteristic of generation after generation, hasn't it?
We go back this morning 2,000 years to Calvary or just prior to Calvary when Jesus is on trial and what do you hear from the crowd as Jesus stands trial before Pontius Pilate?
What is it that you hear them crying? You hear them crying, crucify Him, crucify Him, put Him to death. Is there glorifying God there? Is there response from the crowd there of appreciation?
[10:33] Is there response in the cry, crucify Him, crucify Him? Is there love there? Is there adoration for what God is doing in this Jesus there? No, there is no glorifying God at the trial of Jesus.

We move on several years after to the encounter of Paul with the philosophers at Athens. Is there glorifying the God who has made all things and made man for Himself at Athens in the response of these great, seemingly great philosophers at Athens.
In their words to Paul, what new thing is this? Is this babbler bringing us some new religion? They knew there was a God. Their philosophy speculated on a God who possibly made things.
But they did not glorify God as God when Paul came with the message of the true God because they thought He was a babbler. They thought it was some new thing. They didn't see the truth as

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Christ preached, as Paul preached it.
And so our need is born not only because of sin in us, but our need is also born out of the fact that we are unable to glorify God as God.
[11:52] unable to give to Him adoration, unable to give to Him thanks and appreciation, unable to give to Him love and commitment, unable to give to Him lives of service dedicated to His way.

But Paul doesn't just leave it there, he goes on to tell us also that our need is born out of an inability to give thanks to this God. Not only does Paul say they did not glorify Him as God, he also tells us they were not thankful.
There was no thanks on the part of man. And there continues to be no thanks on the part of man to this God who has not only made the world the heavens and the earth, but this God who has made us for Himself.
There is no thanks. No thanks at all. There is no thanks first and foremost at the very common level, but at a level which shows the goodness and the bounty and the love of our God for His creation. There is no thanks to this God for the reign and for the daily providence which men, good and bad, enjoy. There is no thanks.
[13:13] thanks. But then Paul is saying this thanks does not just reflect itself in man's denial of thanks to God for His daily providence. He says, probably by implication, that there is no thanks expressed above all for the greatest commitment and expression of this God's involvement in the world.

thanks for the Lord Jesus Christ. because the catalogue of sin and vice and defilement that's in Rome and His characterizing men as Paul depicts it, His vice and undefilement and indifference to the law of God reflected out of hearts and lives that are given totally to everything that is unlike God and ungodly.
and they are thus reflecting lives that do not give thanks to God for Jesus above all. No thanks for the greatest demonstration of this God's love to the world in the person of Christ.
No thanks for Him coming. No thanks for His example. No thanks for His power. No thanks for His compassion which took Him not only through life but to the point where He laid out His life on Calvary.
No thanks. Men go on their blind way. Men go on their rebellious way. Men go on their indifferent way looking at this Jesus and what is He?
[14:47] He's nothing. And He's nothing to many of us here and He's nothing to many in Tarbert in 1984. It is all a myth or a waste of time.

There is no love of God expressed in it. A God of love would not have put Jesus through what He put Him through. There is no real love there.
There's no real power there is there because this world does not reflect on what Jesus has done and what Jesus promises to do. It doesn't give thanks. This is a fact this morning with us that our need is highlighted again because we do not give thanks.
Do you thank God for your homes? Do you thank God for your families? Do you thank God for your health? Do you thank God for the employment you enjoy?
Do you thank God for the money that comes in from week to week to keep the larder full? Do you thank God for a multitude of common blessings? But do you above all thank God for the person of Jesus?
[16:03] And if you don't I say to you you have need and that need is highlighted because you must thanks from your lips and from my lips is part of our response demanded by God.

And if we have never given thanks to God for Jesus above all else we're still needy people needy needy people. But then he goes on to tell us not only did they not glorify him as God and not only was there this inability to say thanks he also reflects or shows this need is highlighted by the fact of an inability to retain in our minds knowledge of the true God.
for he tells us they became futile in their thoughts. They became futile in their thoughts. And then he tells us later on about their minds and so on and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge God gave them over to a debased mind and so on.
Paul is saying to us there that another aspect or another consequence of sin in each and every one of us is this inability this inability mental this inability of intellect to retain the true knowledge of the living God and that is so evident in the world around us.

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It was evident to the people Paul was writing to it was evident to the multitudes that he preached to it was evident as he catalogues what men and man has done not only in his time but in the history before him and in the history as he experienced it but in the history also that he could look forward and project his mind into.
[17:57] He saw that a consequence of the reality of sin was this inability to retain a knowledge a true knowledge of the Lord God in the mind.

Their minds became futile or they claimed to be wise and that is something that is so significant in that passage. You look at what the claim of man is and what the reality is and you will find an amazing difference or void between the two.
You look at what man claims he is. He claims to be wise. And when you and I when we sit down and we think and we reflect it is so often the case that in our reflection we think we are all right isn't it?
There is nothing we cannot understand. The mind of man projects itself forward there is nothing we cannot achieve. There is nothing in man that allows himself so often to admit that he is ignorant. Ignorance is the last thing that we will admit to. Paul is saying look at the claim and look at the reality. Man claims to be wise.
[19:12] He claims there is nothing he doesn't know. He claims there is nothing he cannot achieve. He claims there is nothing he cannot understand but look at the reality. The reality is so different.

They claim to be wise but in reality they are not wise. He tells us they are foolish. They are foolish. and there is something tragically wrong between what is claimed by man and what is the reality isn't it?
And Paul is saying that reality that reality which expresses itself only at that level is reminding us and is showing us and is bearing home upon our hearts that we are men and women with need. And you reflect allow your minds to reflect over your knowledge of the scriptures. And how often as you go through the scriptures do you see this outworked?
Man claiming to be wise. Let us build a tower they said way back in the Old Testament. Let us build a tower that at the top of it might reach the heavens. Isn't that so stupid when you think about it?
[20:22] But they really believed that if they could build a tower they would ultimately reach the heavens. The tower of Babel never ever reach the heavens never will claim to be wise but so foolish.

The Syrians when they were going to attack the people of God they claimed to be wise and in the reflection they said of Jehovah he is the God of the hills he is not the God of the valleys let us go and let us attack.
what nonsense. The God who is the God of the heavens and the God of the mountains is the God of the valleys as the Syrian armies have found out.
And again we see it with the people of God when they made a calf when they melted the gold and they said let us make God let us make a God they claimed to be wise didn't they?
Let us make a God that we can bow down before and we can worship and it went on through the history of the Old Testament didn't it? Men and women carving what they thought was God and what was God to them that they could worship.
[21:44] But was the calf the calf that had led them out of Egypt was the calf the power and the source that had given them food in the desert?

Was it the calf that gave them the protection from the Egyptians as they came to the Red Sea? Was it the calf that gave them light in the darkness and gave them protection in the daylight?
Was it the calf that kept these people moving and surviving? Foolishness to believe it was. Paul is saying men claim to be wise.
Men claim to be wise. But in reality you're foolish. And it is no different in 1984. No different in this congregation this morning.
The result or the reality of sin in the world in us and in us where the consequence not only of not glorifying God nor thanking God is also demonstrated the need demonstrated by the fact that although we claim to be wise there is this inability because of sin to retain in our minds the true knowledge of God.
[22:56] And that is why when we preach the gospel preach the gospel in 1984 there is the cry constantly to make it simple and to make it understandable and to make it that we can know what

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you're talking about.

Why is that? It is because there's so little knowledge of the true God. God. That is one aspect of it at least. When we go out into the streets and we ask boy or man or woman who is God?
God is some eerie fairy concept some father figure some mystical power that will not at all destroy the world in judgment.
He's some Santa Claus figure the God of this world. We ask them who the Lord Jesus is. And they will tell you he was a good man that lived to 2000 years ago.
What did he do? I don't know. I don't know what he did. They can't even tell you that he healed the lame. He gave sight to the blind.
[24:07] He allowed the deaf and the dumb faculties they never had before experienced. They'll never be able to tell you that he walked on sea. And above all they'll never know and they'll never tell you.

2000 years ago he died. He died for sinners such as we. This inability total inability to retrain a true knowledge of God in the mind.
But then also Paul tells us this further aspect or consequence of sin in each and every one of us which shows us and reminds us that we're needy.
He says their foolish hearts became dark. This aspect that the heart the heart which for Paul was the the hub of human existence every time he uses it he uses it to convey what is that part of us that makes us tick.
That part of us which allows us to think allows us to act allows us to feel allows us to speak allows us to behave. And here the heart is used by Paul to convey the fact to convey the fact that every aspect of our make mind heart emotions mind emotions and actions are affected by the reality of sin in each and every one of us.
[25:40] And he's saying that this aspect has so pervaded us it has so influenced it has so destroyed it has so gripped us that we're unable to think straight at one level emotionally we're a despairing people and in our actions we're a people that even at very best are corrupt but Paul himself knew that.

The good I would do it's that very thing I do not do but what I ought not to do is the very thing I find myself doing. So Paul is saying there is this inability of heart this inability in what gives us our motivation there is this non-motivating power in each and every one of us to give ourselves to the God that we ought to give ourselves to.
There is this non-motivation within each every one of us to love the Lord Jesus Christ to serve him and to adore him and to follow him.
And that's so real isn't it? Mentally we do not like to think along these lines. We like to think upon everything else but the realities of life and death.
we like to think upon our plans for next year's holidays and next week's commitments and next week's enjoyments. But we do not like to think along the lines that we're needy people and we're needy people with a spiritual need that requires dealt with and dealing with by God himself.
[27:20] We don't like thinking about death. We don't like thinking about eternity. There is this inability because the heart is darkened he tells us. the heart is darkened.

That which gives us motivation to do all these things has been dulled. Dulled to the point where it does not and will not give itself and allow the individual to give himself or herself to the things that are important.
Mind is affected. Emotions are affected. The heart being dulled affects the emotion the emotions and we only need to think of various examples to bring this home.
Today we may feel very comfortable here. There is not much trouble in us. But if we were to spend some time just as I said to the children through next door in our talking one to one we would find that there is despair in our hearts.
There is concern. concern. There is concern over health. There is concern over the fact that in our minds and in our lives we don't know real peace and contentment.
[28:34] We don't really feel a happy people all the time as we ought. We also in our emotions when we reflect on death are despairing. We are anxious.

We put it away because we don't want to think about it. But the heart being dulled leaves us always conscious that it's there and always worrying about what it's going to be and what it's going to be like.

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And as we project ourselves beyond death there is despair also in the sense that where will we spend eternity? Where will I be in eternity?
Will I be with God or will I be in that place that he says is an awful place, a place called hell? Emotionally we're affected.
The heart being darkened. But then also in our actions, because the heart is darkened, we're affected. We're sometimes an uncouth people, aren't we?
[29:38] Even our good deeds so often are tempted, tainted with selfishness, aren't they? We extend a hand of kindness, but we extend a hand of kindness to get a slap on the back, and the acknowledgement of how wonderful we are.

We're so often a vicious people, aren't we? We open our mouths when we know we shouldn't open our mouths, and we cut people down when we know we shouldn't cut people down, by our tongues and by our gossiping, and by our malice and our indifference and our hatred of men and women, some of them very close to us.
Our actions, because the heart is darkened, shows us again that we're needy, doesn't it? And so Paul says, not only does the reality of sin show us our need, but as he has brought out there in that chapter, in that verse 21, the consequences of sin also show us our need.
How is it we can glorify God? how is it we thank God? How is it we retain a true knowledge of God? How is it we have a heart that is motivated towards service to God?
He's saying that is a need that's real, but it's a need that's only met as we give ourselves through faith to the Lord Jesus Christ.
[31:07] The time is almost gone, and I leave this last thought with you also, which highlights the need. and that is brought home to us in verse 18, where Paul says not only of the reality of sin, not only of the results or consequences of sin, but he also says this need is brought home upon man because of the reaction of God to sin.

And the reaction of God to sin is told us in verse 18, where he says, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.
Paul is saying your need and my need, if we have never been to the Lord Jesus Christ, your need and my need, if we've never had our sin and our filth forgiven, is a need that is highlighted and exposed for what it really is, finally, because of the reaction of God to it.
This God who has made the heavens and the earth, this God who has made you and I to honour him and to serve him and to love him, this God is a God who is not going to allow sin go away unpunished.
He's not. No matter how we live imagining or thinking or believing that he'll do it in the end of the day, our sin will be exposed, our unbelief will be exposed, our indifference to God will be exposed, our hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ will be exposed, our non-commitment to his ways and his demands will be exposed.
[32:52] He will expose them in his judgment, in his wrath which he will bring down upon these things. That is strong and that's frightening, but it's also challenging to us this morning.

challenging in this sense that it's reminding us of the reality of God's anger and God's wrath against sin but at the same time it is saying see it but in seeing it do something about it.
And you look about this wrath and you notice that Paul tells you it's a present reality because it is revealed now. The wrath of God is revealed now and it's revealed now in a sense as Paul catalogues for you there that God has given man over to what he wants and to what he likes and to what he has given himself to.
He has given himself over he has let the lid off and he has allowed man go his own way and what is the catalog the catalog you can read for yourself. The catalog there which lists from verse 29 and even before there from verse 21 that catalog of man's sin and man's indifference and man's hostility and man's waywardness from God is part of God's wrath revealed now.
Paul in chapter 2 you read went on to show that that wrath is to be revealed in the future as well. It is an anger it is a judgment that is coming in the future where he says in verse 2 we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things and in verse 5 he says in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you're treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God there is a day of judgment judgment and let us never forget that there is a day ahead of you and I whether we like it or not when we're going to stand before a righteous a just a holy God and a God of love at the same time

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and we're going to be judged we're going to be assessed and that's a solemn solemn meeting [35:25] Paul is saying your need and my need is highlighted because of that reaction to sin sin in us and sin's consequences and we'll come back to that issue on some other occasion but as Paul has been highlighting the need and with this we're finished as he's been highlighting the need one of the wonderful things of that same chapter is this that as he shows the need of you and I he also comes with on the other hand with the solution that God has opened up and God has provided in verse 16 he tells us that the solution lies in the glory and in the wondrous fact that there is good news if the message from the pulpit was wrath and judgment upon a holy God with no offer or invitation or solution to the problem it would be an awful and solemn and despairing time but the glory of the Christian truth is that as it challenges men with the problem and with the need of our lives it also reaches out a hand to each and every one of us with the solution to the problem and Paul tells us the solution is in the gospel the good news of

Jesus and his salvation the good news of Jesus and his redemption the good news of which Paul is coming to Rome with and he's coming to Rome unashamed of it because he knows that in the midst of all Rome's vileness and in the midst of all Rome's hostility and indifference and not glorifying God as God he comes with the solution to that problem good news of Jesus and he's proud of it the good news that Jesus saves that Jesus cancels out the past the good news that Jesus forgives sin present and forgives sin future and forgives sin past the good news that this wrath of God can be avoided do you see your need here this morning are you conscious of your need do you believe you have need if you've never been to Jesus if you're not trusting
Jesus as savior you still have need and you have need that's real may God help you in recognizing that need to come to the place where the need can be dealt with where the problem can be solved where you in your commitment and in your acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as savior can divert the wrath and the anger of this God from your need and mine let us pray oh gracious and eternal God we come this morning praying that we may truly see our need see our need because we recognize that we're sinful people see our need because we know that we do not glorify you as God nor do we give thanks nor are we able to retain in our minds true knowledge of you and also when we look inside our hearts we do find ourselves frightened we do find ourselves despairing we do find ourselves even when we do good conscious of bad and evil help us oh God not only to see that need in all these areas help us oh God also to recognize that you're angry with it you can't stand it you hate it just as as parents we hate the wrong and the badness that so often we find in our children and when we boil and when we fume and when we're angry and when we're hostile against them because of their errors and their misdoing and their misdemeanors let us oh God see that when we gather the world's sin and the consequences of a world's sin and lay it before a holy and a just
God a God who cannot stand his world in its sin and sinfulness let us oh God capture a glimpse of his anger and his wrath but as we capture that glimpse allow us also to flee to the Lord Jesus Christ and to trust him as saviour to ask him to forgive our sins and to make us new and to help us live for him for these things we ask in Jesus name Amen

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